



December 14, 2025 – Third Sunday in Advent

AS WE GATHER

The kingdom of God has broken into creation through Jesus. His deeds (healing the sick, casting out demons, forgiving sins, etc.) bring about God's kingdom by restoring creation. His deeds also illicit various responses to who Jesus is and what He does. Some fear and glorify God. Others question who this Jesus really is. Others are skeptical of Him. And some outright oppose Him. In our reading today, John the Baptizer is in prison. He has heard of the deeds Jesus has been doing. And for whatever reason he, too, responds. He responds by asking if Jesus really is the One to come. Jesus compassionately offers a resounding "Yes!" He is the One who is to come, and He has been restoring the creation and bringing in God's kingdom. Sometimes we find in ourselves an anxious heart (Isaiah 35:4); we fear, we despair, we doubt, we question. Jesus offers us a compassionate response, too. He reminds us that He is the Christ, who brings about His kingdom among us, also, restoring us to Himself by forgiving our sins and giving us everlasting life and salvation. Praise be to God!

WELCOME

HYMN *LSB 341, "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"*

OPENING VERSICLES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Pastor: This is the day which the Lord has made;

People: **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Pastor: From the rising of the sun to its setting,

People: **the name of the Lord is to be praised.**

Pastor: Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere;

People: **I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.**

Pastor: Make me to know Your ways, O Lord.

People: **Teach me Your paths.**

Pastor: Sanctify us in Your truth.

People: **Your Word is truth.**

Pastor: From the rising of the sun to its setting,

People: **the name of the Lord is to be praised.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Here, at the beginning of our service, we take a step back. We acknowledge before God that we are sinners in need of Christ's forgiveness. Therefore, let us confess our sins to God our Father, imploring Him for the sake of His Son, Jesus Christ, to grant us

forgiveness. We take a moment of silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

Pastor: O almighty God, merciful Father,

People: I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto You all my sins and iniquities with which I have ever offended You and justly deserved Your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am heartily sorry for them and sincerely repent of them, and I pray You of Your boundless mercy and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

Pastor: God be merciful to you and strengthen your faith.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Do you believe that the forgiveness I speak is not my forgiveness but God's?

People: Yes.

Pastor: Let it be done for you as you believe. In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE JOY CANDLE

Pastor: O send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God. (*Psalms 43:3-4*)

Pastor: It is almost at hand!

People: The night is always darkest before the dawn.

Pastor: The first ray of light has pierced the black of night.

People: We are listening. Proclaim the Good News to us!

Pastor: We have gathered together in this House of Joy.

People: We have come to praise God with our hearts and voices.

Pastor: We gather to praise God with repentant hearts.

People: We come to praise God with our whole being!

Pastor: Today we light the candle of Joy.

(Light the third candle.)

All: We worship God with exceeding joy!

HYMN LSB 803, "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee"

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 35:1–10*

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE READING *James 5:7–11*

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL READING *Matthew 11:2–15*

Pastor: The holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the eleventh chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ⁴ And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.” ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹ What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written, “ ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.’ ¹¹ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom

of heaven is greater than he. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

RESPONSORY

Pastor: Forever, O Lord, Your Word is firmly set in the heavens.

People: **Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.**

Pastor: Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it.

People: **Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.**

Pastor: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

People: **Lord, I love the habitation of Your house and the place where Your glory dwells.**

HYMN *LSB 849, "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"*

SERMON *"The Compassionate Jesus"*

APOSTLE'S CREED

All: I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

OFFERING

PRAYER

Pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For... let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Finally, for these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

All: **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

COLLECT FOR THE WORD

Pastor: Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

NEW TESTAMENT CANTICLE *(Music and words in hymnal, LSB 266-267)*

All: *Refrain:* Christ has been raised from the dead! Alleluia. Alleluia.

Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. Raised from the dead, He will never die again. Death has no more dominion over Him. *Refrain*

Dying, Christ dies to sin, once for all. Living, He lives to God. Count yourselves as dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. *Refrain*

BLESSING

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

People: Amen.

HYMN *LSB 830, "Spread the Reign of God the Lord"*

Service adapted from the Service of Prayer and Preaching, LSB 260-267.



ANNOUNCEMENTS for Week of December 14, 2025

Grace Lutheran Church 1120 S. Park Ave. Aurora, MO

Church: 417-678-3603 Pastor Daniel Heitshusen

Cell: 832-727-3135 daniel.heitshusen@gmail.com Pastor's Day Off; Friday

Family for the Week: Alan & Diane Heisner Family
Immanuel, Lockwood

Prayers of Peace and Comfort:

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Prayers for Health and Healing:

Complete Prayer List:

Temporary

Bruce Banks – (friend of Teri Ediger)

Becky – (daughter of Diane and Bill Thompson)

Jeannie Bennett – (relative of Teri Ediger – health and healing)

Pat Bricco – (friend of Grace – health and healing)

Treasa Bussey – (friend of Pam Bowling – health and healing)

Joyce Campbell – (friend of Wanda Thompson – health and healing)

Bonny Gray – (sister of Cynthia Swoye r[Wolf] – health and healing)

Pastor Hagen – (health and healing)

Zana Haley and baby Veda – (Cathy Munden's granddaughter)

Jeeper Meyer – (health and healing from cancer)

Bill Parsons – (Joanne Michel's brother – health and healing)

Suzanne Parsons – (friend of Sue Doss – health and healing)

Joe Pennington – (brother-in-law of Bill Michel – health and healing)

Betty Pinkley – (Cousin Kathy Holle – health and healing)

Billy Schmells – (friend of Cheryl Lile – health and healing)

LC Stalcup – (relative of Gladys Bauer – health and healing)

Tim Tucek – (relative of Gladys Bauer – peace and comfort)

Dayton Wheeler – (grandson of Wanda Thompson – surgery)

Jacquelyn Zimmer – (friend of Edee Chambers – health and healing)

Long Term

Doug Bernard – (Cathy Munden's cousin – health and healing)
Jill Bode – (niece of Rachel Sanford – health & healing, cancer)
Kathy Browne – (friend of Kathy Holle – health and healing)
Mary Ann Campbell – (friend of Harold Lampe – peace and comfort)
Jackie Clark – (Micki Gettman's friend – healing from a broken-hip)
Dorthea Dennis – (health and healing)
Glenda Enlow – (health and healing)
Lois Gaddy – (friend of Gwen Lampe – health and healing)
Gary Gardner – (health and healing)
Betty Gordon – (health and healing)

Pastor Gary Griffin – (health & healing from cancer)
Robbie Krueger – (friend of Kathy Holle)
Marybeth Lamp – (friend of Pam Bowling – health and healing)
Mitzie Lorenz – (friend of Harold Lampe – peace and comfort)
Pat Michel – (Bill Michel's sister-in-law – health & healing)
Margaret Seburn – (cousin of Joanne Michel – health and healing)
Ruth Stoddard – (health & healing)
Larry Swart – (friend of Bill Munden – health and healing from cancer)
June Winger – (Sharon Barlow's mother – health & healing)

THIS WEEK

Sunday	December 14th	9:00 am - Happy Half Hour 9:30 am - Fellowship 10:00 am – Service
Monday	December 15th	NO Braille
Wednesday	December 17th	Service - 6:00 pm
Thursday	December 18th	Elders Meeting – 9:30 am Council – 11:00 am
Friday	December 19th	Pastor's Day Off
Sunday	December 21st	Christmas Program - 10:00 am Pot Luck Lunch to follow program
Monday	December 22nd	Braille - 9:00 am & 1:00 pm

Birthdays: Dec. 18-Pam Bowling; Dec. 20-Betty Gordon
Anniversaries: None

December

14: Cheryl Lile & Gladys Bauer
21: Charlie & Edee Chambers
28: Bill & Joanne Michel

14&17: Harold Lampe
21: Bill Michael
24&25: Charlie Chambers
28: Mitch Littler



The Christian Service Center needs children's socks and mittens. Please have socks and mittens to church by Dec. 21. Thank you as these items go to local children.

Advent Midweek Services: Our Advent midweek services will be held on Wednesday, December 3, 10, and 17 at 6 pm. The theme will be the Servant Songs of Isaiah, as we look forward to Christmas when Jesus, the Servant of the Lord, is born. Come and join us!

Silver Tree 2025: Again this year we will be gifting residents of Hudson House. There are currently ten residents with limited family support. A list of gift ideas has been put together by each resident. A Master List showing the resident's name and gift requests is located in the Conference Room. If you are able to provide one or more of these gifts, please sign your name next to the listed gift. These gifts will need to be wrapped with the name of the recipient and brought to the church by December 20th to be delivered to Hudson House.